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PENCE CHILD INTERNET BILL PASSES HOUSE

Washington, Mar 27, 2003 - WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Mike Pence today applauded House passage of the Child Protection Act, which includes legislation authored by Pence to punish those who use misleading domain names to attract children to sexually explicit Internet sites.

Under the provisions of the bill, which is supported by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, those who mislead children with pornography could be fined up to \$250,000 and/or imprisoned for up to two years. The bill passed the House 410-14.

"The Internet can be a force for good, or a force for evil," said Pence, a member of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property. "At its best, the web is used to disseminate information and provide educational materials to children. Teachers and parents often encourage children to turn to the Internet for research on school projects.

"At its worst, the Internet can be used to deceive children into viewing inappropriate material. One of my goals during my time in Congress is to help protect children from those who would prey on them. These websites use legitimate-sounding domain names to lure children to sites with sexually explicit material. Imagine your own child visiting a website with a domain name that sounds like it contains educational or child-related materials, only to have a lewd image pop up on the monitor."

A survey conducted in 2000 by the Crimes Against Children Research Center (CARC) found that 71 percent of teens had accidentally come across inappropriate sexual material on the Internet. In 1999 alone, one out of four minors was exposed to sexually explicit images at least once. Last year before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, an FBI spokesman pointed out that pedophiles often lure children into viewing pornography 'to encourage their victims to engage in sex.'

"This legislation will go a long way toward ending the despicable practice of intentionally targeting children with porn. It is time for Congress to act to stop those who prey on the innocent," said Pence.

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